

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the following listing of claims found below.

#### Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A method for recognizing and rectifying etch-critical regions, said method comprising: ~~the steps of~~

accessing the data structure of a layout;

accessing the data structure of the configuration elements arranged in a plane of the layout;

and

using the measures of a program procedure, determining the critical regions between the configuration elements, modifying the critical regions and visually displaying the modified critical regions, wherein

the determining of the critical regions is defined by height and spacing of the coating to be etched off.

Claim 2. (Currently amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, wherein the modifying of the critical regions is undertaken so that no under-etching can be formed, said modified critical regions being integrated into the existing data structure of the layout.

Claim 3. (Canceled)

Claim 4. (Currently amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, wherein the critical region is adjustable by an admissible, fabrication-oriented, minimal spacing between the configuration

~~elements.~~ (Currently amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 4, wherein the critical regions between the configuration elements are filled out by polygons so that the critical regions between the configuration elements are avoided.

Claim 6. (Currently amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 5, wherein the polygons of the critical regions are limited given possible superimpositions of the configuration elements.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) ~~[[A]]~~The method according to claim 6, wherein the polygons of the critical regions are enlarged slightly so that the edges of the polygons superimpose with the edges of the configuration elements.